

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 165 without my signature.

Given the state's current problems with gang violence and the special diligence necessary to keep at-risk youths out of gangs, I cannot support a measure that would reduce a minor's accountability for committing gang-related crimes.

While I support programs that rehabilitate youth offenders, the terms of the programs for which SB 165 would expand eligibility do not place enough emphasis on accountability. These programs do not require the juvenile offender to admit guilt, provide no penalty for failure to comply with the terms of probation, and the other programs of supervision only last for six to twelve months.

Although I cannot support the approach taken in SB 165, I encourage the Legislature to continue working to reduce gang-related crimes in the state and to protect our state's at-risk youths. In doing so, I hope that it will work closely with my Administration to build on the positive strides that I have already taken in the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention Program (CalGRIP), which provides a comprehensive strategy for fighting gang violence by coordinating the efforts of state and local law enforcement and faith-based and community organizations.

For these reasons I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger